



Inter Department Correspondence Sheet

TO: Constitutional Officers; Appointed Officials; Executive Staff

FROM: City Manager

COPIES TO: Director of Finance; Assistant Director of Finance

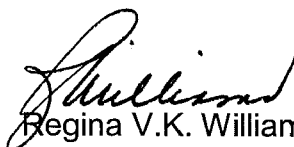
SUBJECT: City Travel Policy

October 21, 2003

Attached is an updated revised City Travel Policy. The Policy contains several new features and is effective November 1, 2003.

The existing mileage reimbursement rate of \$0.345/mile will continue through December 31, 2003. As of January 1, 2004, the rate will be \$0.375/mile which is consistent with Internal Revenue Service regulations.

If you should need clarification or have questions, please contact Karen Stephenson, Assistant Director of Finance at 664-4090.


Regina V.K. Williams

Policy and Administrative Regulations

Chapter 3: FINANCE AND BUDGET ADMINISTRATION

Title: CITY TRAVEL POLICY

EFFECTIVE: November 1, 2003

POLICY ORIGINATION: DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

APPROVAL: 

PURPOSE:

It is the policy of the City of Norfolk:

- A. For the employees to absent themselves from regular location of duties to travel out of the City when such travel is clearly beneficial or necessary to the official business and the conduct of the affairs of the City government. When considering travel, employees shall consider the cost effectiveness of the required travel, balanced with the business need, protecting the public trust and responsible use of public funds is paramount.
- B. That employees who make such travel shall be those in each instance who are appropriate to the purpose of the travel by virtue of particular benefits of the travel in the performance of their duties or by virtue of their ability or position to conduct the business of the trips. The number of employees permitted to travel from each department should be limited to the development of staff in areas considered critical for the accomplishment of departmental goals. Departments should consider the cost benefit and operational impacts of group travel. On-site training should be considered in the event that more than three employees from a department are required to travel to a single event. Prior approval by an Assistant City Manager for more than three employees from a department for travel to a single event is required.
- C. No more than two Executive Staff members should travel on the same public transport (plane, train, bus, etc.). In no event should a director and assistant director be on the same public transport.
- D. That travel shall be subject to controls as to approval procedures, frequencies of travel of individuals and of employees collectively within units of the government, confirmation of justification or purpose of travel and/or availability of budgeted funds for travel.
- E. For the City to assume the obligation of reasonable and necessary expenses as incurred by employees undertaking travel on behalf of the City.
- F. Employees are encouraged to use a travel agency or discount internet travel services in arranging travel.

I. Description of Out-of-Town Travel

For the purpose of this policy, out-of-town travel is all travel outside the City's limits with the exception of:

- A. Travel between City and neighboring cities, except wherein reimbursable lodging is required.
- B. Travel to inspect City-owned facilities in neighboring cities and counties.

- C. Travel between the City and neighboring cities and counties in connection with the transportation of children to and from foster homes served by the Department of Human Services (Division of Social Services) to be placed.

II. Responsibilities

- A. The department heads and heads of offices and agencies will ensure that travelers are familiar with this policy and related procedures.
- B. The traveler shall submit a request for out-of-town travel within reasonable advance time to allow normal processing, a minimum of two weeks before departure.
- C. The traveler will prepare the voucher for reimbursement for travel expenses in accordance with these travel policies, procedures and instructions. Where travel is funded in whole or part by a State or Federal grant, the travel regulations and reporting requirements of the granting agency also must be followed.
- D. The travel expense voucher shall contain a statement that the expenses were actually incurred by the traveler as necessary traveling expenses in the performance of official duties and that the travel claim is true and correct as to every material matter. The names of all persons for whom expenses have been incurred shall be listed on the travel voucher.
- E. The Department of Finance is responsible for enforcing compliance with regard to this policy.

III. Approving Authority

- A. With the exception of the City Council members, Elected and Appointed Officials, and members of their respective staffs as otherwise provided in this policy, out-of-town travel shall be approved by the department head in charge of the department in which the employee requesting travel is assigned. The travel of executive staff office and department heads, assistant city managers, and so forth requires the approval of the City Manager or designee. In those divisions of the City which do not comprise a department, the initial recommendation shall be made by the division head with final approval by the City Manager or designee.
- B. Travel by any employee out of country must be approved in advance by the City Manager or designee.
- C. Where travel does not require more than one day, to and return, and does not require overnight lodging, approval of a request may also be made by a department head or his/her designee.
- D. Approval, with regard to this section of the policy, pertains to the authorization to travel and the request for cash advance and payment voucher.

IV. Transportation

- A. Mode – the most efficient and economical method of travel, including group travel, if more than one employee from a department has been authorized to travel, should be used for each trip based on the following criteria:
 - 1. The nature and urgency of the business.

2. The time of the travel.
3. The cost of transportation and any associated en-route expenses including meals and lodging.
4. The number of persons making the trip.
5. The distance to be traveled.

B. City Vehicles

1. City vehicles should be used whenever possible for ground transportation to and from the destination, subject to the safe and economical condition of the vehicle or vehicles assigned or available.

C. Commercial Aircraft

1. Aircraft may be used when this has been determined to be the most economical and feasible means of travel. When a trip is over 175 miles and air transportation is available, the feasibility of traveling by air should be considered.

The fare of commercial air transportation on any trip should not exceed the lowest available standard economy fare except when an economy fare is not available. The use of advanced reservation, non-refundable, excursion fares is strongly encouraged for travel for all employees below the department head level where the meeting, training or other business engagement will begin or end on the day before or the day after a weekend and the use of the fare will result in a cost savings. Excursion fares may require the traveler to spend Saturday night at the destination. Where the travel meets the qualifications to use the excursion fare and a cost savings will result, the employee should consider the use of the excursion rate. When elected, the employee will be reimbursed the cost of the excursion fare, plus the extra cost of meals and lodging that would be required to use that class of fare.

The use of first class airfare is limited for absolute business necessities or health reason. Cross country non-stop flights over four hours with immediate meetings or events following the flight may be considered. Under all circumstances the appropriate use of public funds and the public trust must be considered.

Where an employee is adverse to flying, this section is not to be construed as imposing the obligation of using aircraft travel. However, the mileage reimbursement will be limited to the amount of the lowest standard economy commercial airfare available between the points of travel and reimbursement will not be made for any lodging or other costs enroute related to the use of the private automobile or other commercial carrier.

D. Private Automobile

1. Use of an employee's private automobile may be authorized by a department director if other means of transportation are not feasible or where the City's convenience or where the number of travelers is best served by this type of transportation.

2. If City cars are not available, travelers will be reimbursed at a rate determined annually by the City Manager for normal expenses such as gasoline and oil, and other routine vehicle expenses.
3. Speedometer mileage readings will be taken at departure and arrival times and will also be shown on the expense voucher.
4. The shortest, most economical route is the route that will be authorized for payment. Mileage in excess of that required for the trip plus a reasonable allowance for local travel at destination will require substantiation in order to be reimbursed.
5. Expenses such as parking fines, traffic fines, and the cost of towing and repairs on a private vehicle will not be reimbursed.

E. Other

1. If travel is performed by any common carrier and the fare is paid by the employee, a receipt must be obtained for reimbursement.
2. No traveler shall be allowed either mileage or transportation expense when transported by another traveler who is entitled to mileage or transportation expense.
3. Commercial for-hire vehicles (Budget, National, Hertz, Avis, etc.) are permitted for out of town travel. The traveler, however, may be required to justify the need for such rental or for-hire vehicle in connection with the purposes of the trip. The rental vehicle chosen must be the most economical available, given the purpose for which the vehicle will be used. Traveler should purchase liability and property damage insurance provided by the renter at the time of rental confirmation. Coverage should extend through the entire rental period.

V. Lodging

Employees, or other persons properly documented and officially recognized as serving the City's interests, will be reimbursed for the actual cost of lodging at the single occupancy rate except in those cases where it can be shown that single occupancy accommodations were not available or not in the best interest of the City. Reimbursement of lodging must be substantiated by paid bills. When two or more persons travel together, the use of a double room may be undertaken on a voluntary basis. The employee must obtain the government room rate, whenever it is available.

The need for lodging shall be substantiated in the travel authorization request and will be based on the distance from Norfolk and the nature of the business that requires the travel. In most cases, the destination must be at least one and one-half hours from Norfolk. Where lodging is requested and the travel does not meet the time distance requirements stated above, the justification for lodging must be attached to the travel request and approved by the City Manager's Office prior to the commencement of the travel.

VI. Meals

- A. Employees are permitted to be reimbursed for meals on a per diem basis or based on meal receipts. On a daily basis an employee must determine whether to claim reimbursement on a per diem or meal receipts. For example, an

employee is not permitted to claim a per diem reimbursement for breakfast and lunch and claim a receipt reimbursement for dinner on the same day. An employee, however, may claim a per diem reimbursement for all meals in one day and a receipt reimbursement for all meals on another day.

- B. Per diem reimbursement for subsistence while on official business, including tips, is limited to \$30 per day. (\$7 for breakfast, \$10 for lunch, and \$13 for dinner).
- C. If it becomes necessary to spend in excess of the \$30 daily limitation, meal receipts must be submitted for that day to receive reimbursement of the actual amount spent. Breakfast, lunch and dinner must be separately itemized for each day on the expense voucher.
- D. When meals are part of a business program of a conference or seminar and the cost is not covered in the registration fee, the actual cost will be reimbursed if properly documented. The other meals on that date will be in accordance with subparagraph B, above.
- E. When multiple employees are traveling together, one payment may be made to cover meals for all employees. The employee rendering payment is eligible for reimbursement in accordance with the guidelines specified in this document.

VI. Incidental Expenses

- A. The following incidental traveling expenses will be reimbursed, **if receipt is provided**, while on official business:
 - 1. Ferry fares and bridge, road and tunnel tolls.
 - 2. Taxi, airport limousine or bus fares. Reasonable effort shall be made to obtain the most economical transportation to and from airports.
 - 3. Fees for storing or parking motor vehicles.
 - 4. Conference or seminar registration fees.
 - 5. Fees for professionally oriented field trips or other special events sponsored by a conference or seminar.
 - 6. Charges for special transportation of supplies or material necessary to the purposes of the travel.
 - 7. Telephone, fax, and telegraph charges when related to the business of the City or directly of assistance to the traveler in aid of arrangements of the travel and when identified as to person and/or office called. The employee shall be reimbursed for the reasonable cost of one personal telephone call every other day of travel.
 - 8. Fee for traveler's checks when the value of such checks does not exceed any advance City funds or estimate of expense.
 - 9. Tips and gratuities when reasonable and explained not to exceed 20%.
 - 10. Reasonable charges for local telephone calls.
 - 11. Reasonable business related internet telephone charges.

12. Insurance on rental cars when obtained for official City business.
 13. When an employee is required to travel and as a result has to provide dependent care or assisted living arrangements for dependent family members in the employee's absence, the City will pay up to \$25 per day to assist with expenses resulting from business travel. The employee must provide sufficient documentation verifying the relationship and financial burden for the individuals requiring care. Department heads are required to review documentation and determine that the need is justified prior to travel.
 14. When an employee is required to travel and as a result has to provide animal care expenses, the employee must submit a letter to their department head certifying that no other animal care arrangements could be secured. Pre-authorization must be granted by your department head in order for you to be reimbursed by the City for basic animal care. The City will pay up to \$17 per day for room and board only. Any additional cost incurred, such as cost for shots, extra food, grooming, etc are not considered eligible cost and will not be reimbursed by the City.
- B. Receipts for incidental expenses must be obtained and submitted with the traveler's request for reimbursement within a reasonable period of time. Other items must be reasonable and subject to explanation when requested. All receipts should contain the amount of the payment, the date, the location and the name of the vendor. If the expense is incurred in conjunction with a meeting or other event, the receipt should contain a description of the type of meeting or event, the purpose the names of the persons for whom the expense is incurred and the nature of the business relationship with those individuals.
- C. The City does not support or encourage the use of alcoholic beverages. However, it is recognized that in certain business-social settings a limited serving of such beverage may occur, as part of or expected business social grace. Reimbursement for reasonable expenses for alcoholic beverages may be permitted only when the City is hosting a business related group meeting or meal.
- D. The following items will not be reimbursed to a traveler:
1. The cost of air travel insurance unless the City of Norfolk is the named Beneficiary.
 2. The cost of closed circuit/cable TV movies.
 3. Any fine, bail bond or legal expense resulting from an action or actions by a traveler in the course of travel unless the specific action or actions causing such expense was/were an official action and was/were deemed unavoidable rather than a personal action and an avoidable action. In case of question, all pertinent facts shall be submitted to the City Manager for review and decision.

VII. Advance Registration Fees

It is sometimes beneficial to submit registration fees or deposits for lodging well in advance of actual travel. In such cases, it will be necessary for travel authorization forms to be submitted in such time that approval of travel and processing of a check can be

handled on a routine basis. Total estimated cost of travel will include the registration fee or deposit.

VIII. General

- A. Departure and arrival times for expense reporting purpose will coincide with departure from and return to home or office.
- B. If a traveler assumes an expense for a person other than a City of Norfolk employee, reimbursement will be made for that traveler's expenses subject to the same limitations contained in this policy. The employee is also required to document the nature of association, description and purpose of the meeting or event, and amount of expense on the traveler's voucher. Example of other person would be Citizen board or commission member, business contact, or person in custody. It is required that such other people have direct and then current business with the City.
- C. For a non-employee person traveling on business for the city, i.e., citizen board or commission member, when such travel requires overnight lodging or commercial transportation, the procedure of submission of a request and all other provisions of this policy shall be applicable.
- D. It is possible that circumstances could require a traveler to remain absent overnight when the original travel plans indicated otherwise or could require a change in mode or schedule of travel. In such cases, the traveler will notify his/her department head as soon as possible and the expense voucher submitted upon return must note any revision.
- E. Expenses, when significant, that are other than those elsewhere identified in this policy, i.e., purchase of supplies or materials, conduct of programs or activities, should be submitted by request and voucher separately from the employee's travel request and voucher.
- F. When an employee is reimbursed or is to be reimbursed for any expense of travel by other than the City, or when any expense of travel is without charge to the employee, the employee shall not make claim for such expense to the City.
- G. Code of Virginia, Section 2.2 -3103, states that no officer or employee of a state or local government or advisory agency shall solicit or accept money or other thing of value for services performed within the scope of his official duties, except the compensation, expenses or other remuneration paid by the agency of which he is an officer or employee. Travel and expenses thereto, as well as benefits as may be received in the course of travel, may be regarded as being included within the intent of that section of the State Code. When, either in anticipation of travel or in the course of travel, an employee or traveler will have the expenses or benefits of travel or any part thereof provided for or paid for by other than the City, the employee is obligated to assure, before inviting, accepting or receiving such expenses or benefits, that there is no conflict with the above Code requirements or with good judgement. In the case of an employee having questions in any such situation, the matter should be reviewed with the employee's immediate supervisor.

X. Travel Forms

The travel authorization form and travel expense voucher form may be obtained by department or offices from the Print Shop. Employees may obtain forms and vouchers from their supervisory office.

XI. Advance of Funds

The employee authorized to travel may secure an advance of funds to cover anticipated cost of travel by presenting the approved travel advance form to the City Treasurer.

XII. Settlements

The City Treasurer is authorized to advance travel funds within the ten-day period prior to the date travel is to commence.

The travel expense voucher must be filed with the Department of Finance within 15 days after the return of the employee to the City. The voucher will be processed in that department in such fashion as to enable the employee to liquidate the advance within 30 days of return.

Travel approval may be withheld to any employee if proper and timely vouchers have not been filed by the employee for one or more prior trips.

XIII. Deviations from travel policy guidelines

Deviations from the City's Travel Policy are permissible where extenuating circumstances exist and proper approval has been obtained. Unique travel needs by a department that are contrary to the City's existing Travel Policy must be submitted in writing to the City Manager or his/her designee for approval prior to implementation. In the absence of approval to do otherwise, the City's Travel Policy shall be enforced as written.

XIV. Effective Date of City Travel Policy

The effective date of this revised policy is November 1, 2003

Revised 10/03